

The Cold War & The Fifties

United States History ACP
Social Studies Department
Wellesley High School
Academic School 2013-2014

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The 1950s and the Cold War

Essential Question:

- **To what extent was the postwar era an era of containment at home and abroad?**

Focus Questions:

- **How did containment drive U.S. foreign policy in the postwar era?**
- **What events escalated the Cold War?**
- **What was the atmosphere of postwar America?**
- **How was containment reflected in the domestic scene of postwar America?**
- **Why was the American Dream more accessible to whites?**
- **Is the nostalgia for the 1950s justified?**

ONLY A STRONG AMERICA CAN PREVENT

DEC.
10c

ATOMIC WAR!



1951

Name:
Date:

US32
Tallevi/Berenson

A Cold War Dilemma

Directions: The year is 1950. Imagine you are the Secretary of State to President Truman.

The nation of Historia is a small, yet resourceful country in the mid-east. It has a rich supply of resources (especially oil) and its location near major ports and other key nations in the mid-east gives it important strategic value. During World War II Historia was occupied by the Nazis who installed a puppet dictatorial regime. After the war ended, the country remained in the control of a small circle of men who basically continued their military dictatorship. Until recently, the people of Historia have just revolted against and overthrew these leaders and now have been debating over what form of government should be installed in its place. According to recent reports, the majority of the nation favors the installation of a communist regime although there is a strong minority contingent that is supporting the creation of a democratic form of government. The United States and the Soviet Union have both been watching the situation closely. It appears that the Soviet Union has been aiding the communist contingent and are gaining increasing support and influence throughout the nation.

Step 1: What options does the United States government have in terms of how to intervene in this situation?

Step 2: After reviewing this list what course of action would you recommend to President Truman?

CHAPTER
26
Section 1

SKILLBUILDER PRACTICE *Analyzing Motives*

How did the Cold War develop so soon after the success of the Allied victory in World War II? When you analyze the motives of the United States and the Soviet Union at the end of the war, look at the experiences, emotions, and needs that compelled each nation to act in a certain way. Read the following passage, and then complete the chart below. (See Skillbuilder Handbook, p. R6.)

U.S. and Soviet War Experiences The Soviet Union suffered more casualties in World War II than all the other Allies combined. The Soviet Red Army lost approximately 7.5 million soldiers, more than twice Germany's loss of about 3.5 million. Moreover, there were about 19 million Soviet civilians killed during the war and another 25 million refugees left homeless. Much of Russia, Poland, and the Ukraine lay in ruins, having been overrun and scorched several times during the fighting.

Although 405,000 U.S. soldiers died in the war, there were no civilian casualties, and the continental United States was never invaded or bombed. The industrial production necessitated by the war helped the country out of the Depression and revitalized its capitalist economy. By 1945, almost half of all the goods and services produced in the world came from the United States.

U.S. and Soviet Goals It was clear even before the end of the war that the United States and the Soviet Union had different goals for Europe.

The United States wanted to rebuild Europe, especially Germany, so that the burden of feeding so many refugees would not fall on American tax-

payers. It was also in U.S. interests to have economically strong European countries that were able to buy U.S. products. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, wanted to rebuild itself. Stalin thought Germany should pay \$20 million in machinery and raw material as reparations for the wrongs the Soviets had suffered during the war.

After the Soviet experience in the war, Stalin feared invasion from the West. Gaining military and political control of Eastern Europe was his way of creating a buffer from further attack. Since the Red Army occupied the countries it liberated from the Germans, Stalin quickly set up or supported similar Communist governments. According to Stalin, "In this war, each side imposes its system as far as its armies can reach. It cannot be otherwise."

For its part, the United States feared totalitarian regimes that imposed their own systems on otherwise free and independent nations. Stalin in his desire for absolute control, Truman argued, was every bit as ruthless and dangerous as Hitler. Truman's efforts to contain communism was a diplomatic compromise between going to war again and stopping the Soviets from gaining any more power in the world than they already had.

	Experiences During War	Emotions After War	Needs After War
SOVIET UNION			
UNITED STATES			

The Cold War Video:

1. Describe the goals of the United States and the Soviet Union.

United States	Soviet Union

2. How many decades did the Cold War last for?

3. What was the iron curtain?

4. Describe the objective of the Truman Doctrine?

5. What was the goal of the Marshall plan?

6. What did Germany look like after WWII?

7. In 1948, West Germany was united and freed. What did the Soviet Union do in protest?

How did the Allied powers respond.

8. What was the goal of NATO?

9. What was the WARSAW pact?

10. Why was the Communist take over China significant?

11. How does Truman use the U.N. in Korea?

12. How did the U.S. respond to Sputnik?

13. Describe what happened during the U2 incident.

14. How was the Berlin Wall concrete evidence of the "Iron Curtain"?

15. How did the United States respond to the Communist revolution in Cuba?

16. Briefly describe the events of the Cuban Missile Crisis.

17. How did the domino theory push the United States into regions like Vietnam?

18. How was Nixon's approach toward the Soviet Union unprecedented?
19. How did Reagan's policy of "peace through strength" change the policy of détente?
20. What did the agreement signed by Gorbachev and Reagan symbolize?
21. How did the spirit of *glasnost* and *perestroika* inspire the people of Eastern Europe?
22. Describe what happened to the Soviet Union in 1993?
23. When the Cold War ended, peace didn't prevail. For example, the Chinese government didn't permit student protests at Tiananmen Square and ethnic cleansing occurred in Bosnia. Provide details of these events.
24. What new set of challenges did the end of the Cold War leave the United States grappling with?

The Vietnam War: America's Longest War

S U M M A R Y

America's

America's involvement in Vietnam lasted nearly thirty years. Under Truman, Eisenhower, and Kennedy, the United States threw its support behind the French and later the South Vietnamese government in an effort to contain the Communist threat in Asia. Lyndon Johnson transformed the war in 1965 to an offensive combat mission. Between 1965 and 1968 sustained bombing attacks on North Vietnam were accompanied by ever larger infusions of U.S. ground troops. But the Tet offensive of January 1968 highlighted the discrepancy between the administration's glowing accounts of the war and its tortuous reality and marked the beginning of U.S. efforts to disengage from the conflict. Richard Nixon spent another five years trying to end the war, promising Americans "peace with honor." Under his program of Vietnamization, Nixon gradually withdrew U.S. troops while secretly bombing and later invading Cambodia in a futile attempt to destroy enemy havens. The final withdrawal of American troops took place in 1973 under the terms of the Paris Peace accords. The war marked a turning point in U.S. foreign relations, revealing the limitations of American military power in a complex postwar world.

The war also had serious consequences at home, as different viewpoints bitterly divided Americans. Galvanized by opposition to military escalation and the draft, the antiwar movement spread rapidly among young people who staged a series of mass protests between 1967 and 1971. The spirit of rebellion was not limited to the antiwar movement. The New Left challenged university policies and corporate dominance of society, while the more apolitical counterculture preached personal liberation through sex, drugs, music, and spirituality. As the civil rights struggle moved beyond the South, rising militancy and racial strife divided the movement and fueled white opposition to change. At the same time, however, the new black-power movement encouraged racial pride and assertiveness, serving as a model for Mexican Americans, Native Americans, and other ethnic groups. The civil rights movement also helped to inspire a resurgence of feminism and the birth of the gay liberation movement.

The domestic struggle over the war and other issues divided the Democratic Party, resulting in a Democratic National Convention riven with protest and violence in the summer of 1968. The assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert Kennedy and a series of urban riots that year further shocked the nation, fueling a growing public desire for law and order. Although antiwar protests continued into the early 1970s, a new mood of conservatism took hold in the country, contributing to the resurgence of the Republican Party under Richard Nixon.

T I M E L I N E

- 1946 War begins between French and Vietminh over control of Vietnam
- 1950 United States recognizes French-backed government of Bao Dai and sends military aid
- 1954 French defeat at Dienbienphu
Geneva accords partition Vietnam at 17th parallel
- 1962 Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) founded
- 1963 Coup ousts Ngo Dinh Diem in South Vietnam
Presidential Commission on the Status of Women
- 1964 Free Speech Movement at Berkeley
Gulf of Tonkin Resolution authorizes military action in Vietnam
- 1965 Malcolm X assassinated
Operation Rolling Thunder escalates war through mass bombing campaigns
First U.S. combat troops arrive in Vietnam
Race riot in Watts district of Los Angeles
- 1966 National Organization for Women (NOW) founded
Stokely Carmichael proclaims black power
- 1967 Hippie counterculture's "Summer of Love"
Race riots in Detroit and Newark
100,000 march in antiwar protest in Washington, D.C.
- 1968 Tet offensive dashes American hopes of victory
Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy assassinated
Riot at Democratic National Convention in Chicago
Women's liberation movement emerges
American Indian Movement (AIM) organized
- 1969 Stonewall riot leads to gay liberation movement
Woodstock Music and Art Fair
Vietnam moratorium called in protest of war
- 1970 Nixon orders invasion of Cambodia; renewed antiwar protests
Killings at Kent State and Jackson State
- 1972 Nixon visits People's Republic of China
SALT I Treaty with Soviet Union
- 1973 Paris Peace accords
War Powers Act
- 1975 Fall of Saigon

Source: America's History, 5th ed.

Ed. Haretha, James A., David Brody,

John Dumenil, Susan Ware, Bedford/Ma. H.S. Pub. 2004

• Guided Reading, p. 39

Electronic Library of Primary Sources
• The Tonkin Gulf Resolution, 1964, by U.S. Congress

Tracking Themes

AMERICA IN WORLD AFFAIRS

U.S. involvement in Vietnam was a mission to halt the spread of Communism, which was perceived as a threat to democracy and free market economies. Le Ly Hayslip, who grew up in Central Vietnam, saw the struggle from a different perspective. In her autobiography, *When Heaven and Earth Changed Places*, she wrote, "For you [American GI's], it was a simple thing: democracy against communism. For us, that was not our fight at all. How could it be? We knew little democracy and even less about communism. For most of us, it was a fight of independence—like the American Revolution."

3 President Johnson Expands the Conflict

Shortly before his death, Kennedy had announced his intent to withdraw U.S. forces from South Vietnam. "In the final analysis, it's their war," he declared. Whether Kennedy would have withdrawn from Vietnam remains a matter of debate. However, Lyndon Johnson escalated the nation's role in Vietnam and eventually began what would become America's longest war.

THE SOUTH GROWS MORE UNSTABLE Diem's death brought more chaos to South Vietnam. A string of military leaders attempted to lead the country, but each regime was more unstable and inefficient than Diem's had been. Meanwhile, the Vietcong's influence in the countryside steadily grew.

President Johnson believed that a communist takeover of South Vietnam would be disastrous. Johnson, like Kennedy, was particularly sensitive to being perceived as "soft" on communism. "If I . . . let the communists take over South Vietnam," Johnson said, "then . . . my nation would be seen as an appeaser and we would . . . find it impossible to accomplish anything . . . anywhere on the entire globe."

THE TONKIN GULF RESOLUTION On August 2, 1964, a North Vietnamese patrol boat fired a torpedo at an American destroyer, the USS *Maddox*, which was patrolling in the Gulf of Tonkin off the North Vietnamese coast. The torpedo missed its target, but the *Maddox* returned fire and inflicted heavy damage on the patrol boat.

U.S. PLANES ATTACK NORTH VIETNAM BASES; PRESIDENT ORDERS LIMITED RETALIATION AFTER COMMUNISTS' PT BOATS RENEW RAIDS

Two days later, the *Maddox* and another destroyer were again off the North Vietnamese coast. In spite of bad weather that could affect visibility, the crew reported enemy torpedoes, and the American destroyers began firing. The crew of the *Maddox* later declared, however, that they had neither seen nor heard hostile gunfire.

The alleged attack on the U.S. ships prompted President Johnson to launch bombing strikes on North Vietnam. He asked Congress for powers to take "all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression." Congress approved Johnson's request, with only two senators voting against it, and adopted the **Tonkin Gulf Resolution** on August 7. While not a declaration of war, it granted Johnson broad military powers in Vietnam.

Johnson did not tell Congress or the American people that the United States had been leading secret raids against North Vietnam. The *Maddox* had been in the Gulf of Tonkin to collect information for these raids. Furthermore, Johnson had prepared the resolution months beforehand and was only waiting for the chance to push it through Congress.

In February of 1965, President Johnson used his newly granted powers. In response to a Vietcong attack that killed eight Americans, Johnson unleashed "Operation Rolling Thunder," the first sustained bombing of North Vietnam. In March of that year the first American combat troops began arriving in South Vietnam. By June, more than 50,000 U.S. soldiers were battling the Vietcong. The Vietnam War had become Americanized. ⑤

▲ A 1964 newspaper headline announces the U.S. military's reaction to the Gulf of Tonkin incident.

Name:
Date:

US 32

U.S. Involvement & Escalation Pgs 942-947

1. What role did each of the following play in the decision to escalate U.S. military involvement in Vietnam?

A. Lyndon B. Johnson

B. Robert McNamara

C. Dean Rusk

D. William Westmoreland

E. U.S. Congress

F. American Public Opinion

2. What military advantages did the U.S. have over the Vietcong?

3. What military advantages did the Vietcong have over the U.S.?

4. What military strategies did the U.S. use against the Vietcong?	5. What military strategies did the Vietcong use against the Americans?

6. What role did each of the following play in this change of public support?

The U.S. Economy

Television (& define credibility gap)

Fulbright Hearings

Vietnam War

1. Identify:
 - a. Vietminh
 - b. Ho Chi Minh
2. What year did the U.S. enter the conflict in Vietnam? In what capacity?
3. What parallel was established at the Geneva Accords in 1954 that divided Vietnam?
4. Identify:
 - a. Ngo Dinh Diem
 - b. Vietcong
 - c. Ho Chi Minh Trail
5. In 1963 how many American troops were stationed in Vietnam?
6. What happened on November 1, 1963? Why?
7. Describe the Tonkin Gulf Resolution.
8. What was Operation Rolling Thunder?
9. What is the legacy of the Vietnam War?

Name:

US 32

Date:

30.5 The End of the War and Its Legacy

For each of the developments listed below, list one or more reasons WHY they occurred.

1. Nixon adopts a policy of Vietnamization.

2. My Lai massacre shocks Americans.

3. Nixon orders invasion of Cambodia.

4. Violence erupts at Kent State.

5. Congress repeals the Tonkin Gulf Resolution.

6. The "Christmas bombings" take place.

7. South Vietnam surrenders to North Vietnam.

8. Vietnam veterans receive a cold homecoming.

9. Cambodia erupts in civil war.

10. Congress passes the War Powers Act.

11. The draft is abolished.

12. Many Americans lose faith in their government.

Boyer, Paul. Promises to keep: U.S. since WWII
1995



Chapter Three

UNEASINESS AT DAWN: DOMESTIC TRENDS IN THE EARLY POSTWAR YEARS

New York City, September 1945. As the writer James Agee watched a victory parade from a window high above the city streets, his pleasure was edged with apprehension: "The whole city has a kind of love-feast warmth of thousands of great and small homecomings," he wrote a friend. "It is lovely." But immediately he added, "God, what most of the homecomers, and those they come home to, are in for!"

Agee had reason to worry. Even as they welcomed the end of World War II, many Americans eyed the future with concern. Would wartime prosperity collapse without the stimulus of military production? Would peace bring a return of hard times? In fact, demobilization proceeded remarkably smoothly. The economy absorbed the returning veterans as industry switched promptly to peacetime production. These years launched an economic boom that with periodic interruptions would last for several decades.

Nevertheless, as peace returned, the political cleavages of the 1930s reappeared. Truman and his liberal supporters sought to expand the New Deal, but conservatives in both parties doggedly hacked away at what they called its "socialistic" excesses, and business groups gained a greater voice in shaping public policy. Although Truman won a come-from-behind electoral victory in 1948, disputes over the nature of the postwar domestic order raged on.

The war had stirred changes that society was not yet ready to confront. Women had donned uniforms or worked in war plants. African-Americans had served in the military or moved northward and cityward to seek work. Mexican workers had immigrated to the United States in great numbers. Poverty and economic inequities pervaded America. Yet the early postwar era generally failed to address the social and political implications of these developments. President Truman's reform program, offered in the 1948 campaign and after, made little headway. Indeed, in contrast to the New Deal years, the late 1940s brought a generally conservative drift in U.S. politics and social thought. In celebrating the good life of suburbia and an idealized

domestic ideal for women, mass culture, including television, the newest medium, sought to contain the forces of social change, much as Cold War planners worked to contain communism abroad. In this crucial transitional era, the Cold War shaped U.S. politics and culture. Just as Cold War regulations drove U.S. foreign policy, so, too, did the anticommunist struggle influence, and in some ways poison, the domes-

Name:

The Fifties!

27.1-3 Assignment

Find 3-5 examples for each of the following categories. Don't use any one example more than twice. Pay attention to the text as well as to the visuals (pictures and charts!) and don't skip the special full- and two-page spreads on particular topics.

Americans lived the American Dream in the 1950s

The 1950s were NOT characterized by conformity.

America faced major challenges in the 1950s

The 1950s were characterized by compromise

The 1950s were characterized by major changes.

There was progress in the 1950s

The 1950s were characterized by consumerism.

There were major disappointments in the 1950s

The 1950s were characterized by conformity

Many elements of American life that are very familiar to me had their start in the 50

The News Hour with Jim Lehrer: Remembering the GI Bill (transcript)

July 4, 2000

JIM LEHRER: Now, some further perspective on the GI Bill from NewsHour regulars presidential historians Doris Kearns Goodwin and Michael Beschloss, journalist/author Haynes Johnson; joining them tonight Historian Stephen Ambrose, who's written extensively on World War II. His last book was *Citizen Soldiers: the U.S. Army from the Normandy Beaches to the Bulge to the Surrender of Germany*.

A bill that "made modern America"

Steve Ambrose, how important was the GI Bill to this country right after the war?

STEPHEN AMBROSE: Listen, that GI Bill was the best piece of legislation ever passed by the U.S. Congress, and it made modern America. The educational establishment boomed and then boomed and then boomed. The suburbs, starting with Levittown and others, were paid by GIs borrowing on their GI Bill at a very low interest rate. Thousands and thousands of small businesses were started in this country and are still there thanks to the loans from the GI Bill. It transformed our country.

JIM LEHRER: Transformed our country, Doris?

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN: Oh, no question. I agree with everything Steve said, including the passion with which he said it. I think few laws have had so much effect on so many people. It meant that blue collar workers, a whole generation of blue collar workers were enabled to go to college, become doctors, lawyers, and engineers, and that their children would grow up in a middle class family. It meant, as Stephen said, that people had homes, instead of being renters in the city, so that they could bring up their children in a home that they had owned.

I mean, think about it. In 1940, the average GI was 26 years old and had an average of one year of high school as his only education, and now, suddenly, the college doors were open. I mean, it's so amazing to realize that the university presidents thought it was a terrible idea at first. The president of Harvard said it would create "unqualified people, the most unqualified of this generation" coming into college. The president of the University of Chicago feared we'd be creating educational hobos, but as the piece earlier showed, these were mature, responsible people, the best of their generation in college. It shows what happens when you give people who don't have a chance an extraordinary opportunity.

JIM LEHRER: "Extraordinary." "amazing." Haynes, those words do jump to mind, don't you think?

HAYNES JOHNSON: Yeah. And what they said is right; it did transform the country. It made a difference. Steve Ambrose got his graduate degree in Wisconsin. I was on the GI Bill after Korea, and I got a scaled down version, but that's how I got my graduate degree.

JIM LEHRER: I bought my first house on the GI Bill.

HAYNES JOHNSON: Yeah. There you are. I mean, the idea of this - it is so incredible to look back on that - the idea that in 1940 - in the class of '40, as Doris would say, five years after the war, World War II, ended, twice as many Americans graduated from college. That's just the college part. I mean, as Steve was saying about the suburbs, there were 13 million homes built in the 50's, 11 million outside of there with GI loans. I mean, it just - it did transform the country.

JIM LEHRER: Michael, was the transformation intentional, or was it an accidental end result of the GI Bill?

MICHAEL BESCHLOSS: You know, so much of it was accidental, and, you know, we historians, all of us, we love to see a situation where a leader wants something done and then 50 years later it's exactly as he or she wanted, and the amazing thing is that Roosevelt didn't really spend much time on this. He signed this bill two weeks after D-Day. He had spent much less thought on this than he did on most of the New Deal, but if you look at the effect of this, this had much greater impact on bringing Americans into the middle class than everything Roosevelt had tried to do over eight years in the 1930's, and there were all sorts of other unexpected consequences. One was the fact that Americans did move to the suburbs, a good thing in many ways because a lot of people owned houses that they never could have before the war. They used to be renters; they were owners after World War II. But also, houses and then later the interstate highway system caused the cities to decay, so the result of this one bill that didn't even get very much attention - I look back at the newspapers - it really was below the fold on many major newspapers in June of 1944 - had this enormous impact on America, mainly good, but in some ways problematical.

JIM LEHRER: Do you read the record the same way, or that what they were really aiming to do was to reward the veterans, not to change American society, but it just happened?

From soldiers to dedicated students

STEPHEN AMBROSE: Oh, yes, that's absolutely right, and let's remember, this does go back to the Revolutionary War. Revolutionary War soldiers got land bonuses after the war was over, and America has always tried to do something for its veterans after the Civil War. It didn't do very well after World War I, which is why the Bonus March had to take place. But the GI Bill was designed to help veterans, not to transform America. No one had that idea in mind. But I'll tell you. Millions of GIs who never, never dreamed that they might be able to go to college suddenly had the opportunity, and these guys went, and they became - there's a teacher in this country who isn't aware of this - the best students we've ever had. God, they worked so hard, and they - all of them - came back to America feeling I just wasted the best years of my life. I know how to man a machine gun; I know how to fire a mortar; but I can't make a living out of this.

And now they had college opened up to them, and these guys went on a make of 21 hours a semester, 24 hours a semester, and they worked. They just wanted to get that education. I lived in a small college town in Wisconsin, and the houses all around us were divided up into little rooms where the GIs could stay. We had a basketball court in our backyard, and these guys would come over and we'd play - I was 10 years old - we would play basketball together - shirt and skins - damned near every one of them had a scar. And the only recreation they ever took was we'd do an hour of basketball and then it was right back to the books for them, and they're the students that every teacher in this country would just kill to have.

JIM LEHRER: But, Steve, what drove them to go to school? They didn't think about going to college when they went into the army. What happened in the army that - to cause them to take advantage of the GI Bill when they got out?

STEPHEN AMBROSE: They matured. They came to see the benefits that are available if you go out and get yourself educated and then if you work at it, and they brought to going to college a sense of responsibility and a sense of "I want to get ahead."

One of the things that the army or the navy or the air force or the coast guard or the marines have done for them was - they could see - you do your job, you do it well, you're going to get promoted. And if you do that job well, you're going to get promoted again, and pretty soon you're going to be in officer's candidate school. And then you're going to get a battlefield commission and then you're going to go from lieutenant to captain and captain to major and so on. They saw it with their own eyes. They experienced with their own bodies the joys of moving ahead.

JIM LEHRER: And, Doris, to use the word transforming society, I mean, the legacy of what happened to those World War II vets continues to this day, does it not, in our society?

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN: Oh, without question, it's the generation that really built the whole decades that followed after that. You know, just following on what Steve said, most of the people who went into the GI - into the soldier's war - had not left their counties; they hadn't traveled much in the United States. So suddenly they are in this war; they're all over the world; they see things they have never seen before. So possibilities open to them, and I think that's partly what led to that changing attitude toward their educational possibilities I'm going to take advantage of as well. The other thing that's so interesting to remember is that during this debate it was opened up as a possibility that the war workers at home would be eligible, as well, for the GI Bill of Rights, and think of what that would have meant. Women - 60 percent of the jobs in the shipyards and the airplane factories held by women - instead of those women going home and being thrown out of work and then becoming a generation that really didn't move forward until the next generation, think of the social revolution that might have prevailed.

A gateway to the middle class

JIM LEHRER: You know, Haynes, it's staggering to think also what if there had been no GI Bill?

HAYNES JOHNSON: Really, this word "transforming" that he used, Steven used, that's what it did. I mean, the country - we were a class country; we're not supposed to be, this democracy -- equality, "up from the bottom," "make it on your own," "Horatio Alger," all of that -- but this made it possible to go to college, and that wasn't the case of most Americans. They actually had the opportunity. And the irony of this, we're talking about, this was the biggest government grant, in effect, it was the government, federal government. Today people hate the government. This was once there was no debate about it. There's no controversy about it. There's no ideological argument about it.

JIM LEHRER: Why is that, Michael? Why is there no argument? Why does everybody - whether you're from the very far right or the very far left or Republican or Democrat and everything else in-between, everybody loves the GI Bill.

MICHAEL BESCHLOSS: Because it succeeded so well - that's the first thing. And the other thing -

JIM LEHRER: Not everybody wanted society transformed, did they?

MICHAEL BESCHLOSS: No, absolutely. At the time that the bill was debated in Congress it passed only by a very slim margin, and, in fact, a lot of -- particularly Republicans -- said let's not pass this thing because a big part of the GI Bill was to give returning vets \$20 a week for 52 weeks. They felt that would encourage sloth; that people would not try to get jobs. They thought that this would extend the welfare state, rather than do the opposite. But the other thing I think really endures as a part of America's philosophy is this linked the idea of service to education. You serve the country; the government pays you back by allowing you educational opportunities you otherwise wouldn't have had, and that in turn helps to approve this society. That's something that goes all the way back to the time of the Revolution, and I think it's one reason why we think of it so fondly.

JIM LEHRER: Yeah. And, Steve, do you agree that this country that we live in today was changed by the GI Bill? I mean, there are things -

STEPHEN AMBROSE: Absolutely. Listen, Haynes and I went to the University of Wisconsin, and I was a little bit later than he was because I'm a little bit younger than he was (laughter), but just think what it did in Madison or in Cambridge or in East Lansing or in Berkeley. The American educational establishment of today, which is the envy of the world, was made by the GI Bill and those veterans who came back brought about this enormous expansion and jobs for professors and jobs for technicians and jobs in the laboratories and students going to school learning and then going out into the world and applying what they have learned, the beginning of modern America.

Listen, these GIs -- and that includes the marines and the navy and the air force of course - these GIs made modern America, and they did it because the government had enough sense to say we're going to educate these guys. We're not going to be stingy as we were after World War II; we're going to give these guys an opportunity, and they could go to Harvard. They could go to Stanford. They could go to the University of Chicago. They could go, as Art Buchwald did, to the Sorbonne in Paris and get 50 bucks a month if they weren't married, 75 if they were. Later on, that figure was moved up, and they could and study and work and improve themselves, and the institutions that served them, that grew out of this - like the state teacher's colleges in Wisconsin -- or like Harvard and all the others in between - they all benefited from it.

The rise of the suburbs

JIM LEHRER: And, Doris, there's also the housing thing. I mean, it revolutionized the way people live in this country, to this day, right?

DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN: Oh, absolutely. I mean, most of those people were living in cities, often on the wrong side of the tracks, and then they got a chance to own their own home. I mean, I can remember every single father on my block love that little tiny patch of grass that they mowed every Saturday because it was their own home for the first time that they had ever experienced that, but I think there's also the deeper promise. All those promises that brought people to our shores from the very beginning, that in this country there was opportunity to extend yourself to the limits of your ability. Education provided that opportunity for millions of people, made the promise of America real from the Homestead Act of 1862, which gave them a little patch of land, now to that home that they could own and the education to allow them to be

what they could be. It's a great moment, and I'm so glad we're able to remember it like this.

JIM LEHRER: Michael.

MICHAEL BESCHLOSS: I hate to be a downer. One thing that it didn't work so well at was helping black Americans. Many black Americans who got GI benefits could not get into some of these towns - Levittown on Long Island was segregated. You couldn't buy a house if you were black. Many colleges -

JIM LEHRER: The federal government - the GI Bill law did not resolve that.

MICHAEL BESCHLOSS: No. Would give you the money and would give you the money to go to a school, but oftentimes colleges were segregated too. It took civil rights legislation and the Supreme Court in the 50s and 60s to really make the GI Bill do what it ultimately was able to do.

JIM LEHRER: Yeah. What would you add to the housing things, Haynes?

HAYNES JOHNSON: Well, I think the nature of the country and the way we live today, the highways, the cars, the suburban element of it is - that's what America is now. We are no longer in the central cities of our country, and the idea - what Michael is talking about, civil rights, that came later. We focused on civil rights and women's rights - tremendous changes there, but this one came first. And then the integration of the armed forces and then the civil rights, and they all kind of together, I think, really made the difference.

JIM LEHRER: Well, it's stunning - and you have all said it - how one piece of legislation could have such an effect and once you start thinking about it, those effects grow and grow and grow. And thank you all four very much.

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/military/july-decoo/gibill_7-4.html#.5/1/07

From *Housekeeping Monthly*, 13 May, 1955.

View the original article as a graphic

Note: This may actually be fake. See Snopes.



- Have dinner ready. Plan ahead, even the night before, to have a delicious meal ready on time for his return. This is a way of letting him know that you have been thinking about him and are concerned about his needs. Most men are hungry when they get home and the prospect of a good meal is part of the warm welcome needed.
- Prepare yourself. Take 15 minutes to rest so you'll be refreshed when he arrives. Touch up your make-up, put a ribbon in your hair and be fresh-looking. He has just been with a lot of work-weary people.
- Be a little gay and a little more interesting for him. His boring day may need a lift and one of your duties is to provide it.
- Clear away the clutter. Make one last trip through the main part of the house just before your husband arrives. Run a dustcloth over the tables.
- During the cooler months of the year you should prepare and light a fire for him to unwind by. Your husband will feel he has reached a haven of rest and order, and it will give you a lift too. After all, catering to his comfort will provide you with immense personal satisfaction.
- Minimize all noise. At the time of his arrival, eliminate all noise of the washer, dryer or vacuum. Encourage the children to be quiet.
- Be happy to see him.
- Greet him with a warm smile and show sincerity in your desire to please him.
- Listen to him. You may have a dozen important things to tell him, but the

moment of his arrival is not the time. Let him talk first - remember, his topics of conversation are more important than yours.

- Don't greet him with complaints and problems.
- Don't complain if he's late for dinner or even if he stays out all night. Count this as minor compared to what he might have gone through at work.
- Make him comfortable. Have him lean back in a comfortable chair or lie him down in the bedroom. Have a cool or warm drink ready for him.
- Arrange his pillow and offer to take off his shoes. Speak in a low, soothing and pleasant voice.
- Don't ask him questions about his actions or question his judgment or integrity. Remember, he is the master of the house and as such will always exercise his will with fairness and truthfulness. You have no right to question him.
- A good wife always knows her place.

Betty Freidan

The Feminine Mystique, 1963

"The Problem that has no name..."

US32

Can the problem that has no name be somehow related to the domestic routine of the housewife? When a woman tries to put the problem into words, she often merely describes the daily life she leads. What is there in this recital of comfortable domestic detail that could possibly cause such a feeling of desperation? Is she trapped simply by the enormous demands of her role as modern housewife: wife, mistress, mother, nurse, consumer, cook, chauffeur; expert on interior decoration, child care, appliance repair, furniture refinishing, nutrition, and education? Her day is fragmented as she rushes from dishwasher to washing machine to telephone to dryer to station wagon to supermarket, and delivers Johnny to the Little League field, takes Janey to dancing class, gets the lawnmower fixed and meets the 6:45. She can never spend more than 15 minutes on any one thing; she has no time to read books, only magazines; even if she had time, she has lost the power to concentrate. At the end of the day, she is so terribly tired that sometimes her husband has to take over and put the children to bed.

This terrible tiredness took so many women to doctors in the 1950s that one decided to investigate it. He found, surprisingly, that his patients suffering from "housewife's fatigue" slept more than an adult needed to sleep—as much as ten hours a day—and that the actual energy they expended on housework

did not tax their capacity. The real problem must be something else, he decided—perhaps boredom. Some doctors told their women patients they must get out of the house for a day, treat themselves to a movie in town. . . .

It is easy to see the concrete details that trap the suburban housewife, the continual demands on her time. But the chains that bind her in her trap are chains in her own mind and spirit. They are chains made up of mistaken ideas and misinterpreted facts, of incomplete truths and unreal choices. They are not easily seen and not easily shaken off.

How can any woman see the whole truth within the bounds of her own life? How can she believe that voice inside herself, when it denies the conventional, accepted truths by which she has been living? And yet the women I have talked to, who are finally listening to that inner voice, seem in some incredible way to be groping through to a truth that has defied the experts.

I think the experts in a great many fields have been holding pieces of that truth under their microscopes for a long time without realizing it. I found pieces of it in certain new research and theoretical developments in psychological, social and biological science whose implications for women seem never to have been examined. I found many clues by talking to suburban doctors, gynecologists, obstetricians, child-guidance clinicians, pediatricians, high-school guidance counselors, college professors, marriage counselors, psychiatrists and ministers—questioning them not on their theories, but on their actual experience in treating American women. I became aware of a growing body of evidence, much of which has not been reported publicly because it does not fit current modes of thought about women—evidence which throws into question the standards of feminine normality, feminine adjustment, feminine fulfillment, and feminine maturity by which most women are still trying to live.

* * * * *

If I am right, the problem that has no name stirring in the minds of so many American women today is not a matter of loss of femininity or too much education, or the demands of domesticity. It is far more important than anyone recognizes. It is the key to these other new and old problems which have been torturing women and their husbands and children, and puzzling their doctors and educators for years. It may well be the key to our future as a nation and a culture. We can no longer ignore that voice within women that says: "I want something more than my husband and my children and my home."

Directions: The year is 1954

Imagine that you are a doctor examining your patient, a suburban housewife.

Read the article below and create a list of:

① The symptoms of this "problem" with no name."

② Your diagnosis - what exactly is the problem?

③ Prescription - what can you give your patient (or what must occur) for her to get better?

Boyer, Paul. Promises to Keep: US since WWII
Lexington, MA: DC Heath & Co, 1995.

Chapter Five

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE PICTURE WINDOW: OUTSIDERS, DISSIDENTS, AND CRITICS IN THE 1950s

The year is 1954, and in movie houses and drive-ins across the United States, wide-eyed Americans are watching *Them!* an early entrant in what would soon become a deluge of "mutant" movies. The film depicts a storybook American family—father, mother, and daughter—vacationing in New Mexico. But even before the action begins, disaster has struck: Unknown monstrous creatures have ripped apart the family's camper and brutally murdered the parents. Only the daughter survives, so traumatized that she cannot speak except to scream, "THEM!!!" Soon we learn that the killers are giant ants, hatched from the radioactive soil of the atomic-bomb test site at Alamogordo, who spread death and destruction in their insatiable search for sugar. The army is called in and finally exterminates the last of the loathsome mutants in the storm sewers beneath Los Angeles.

In its bizarre fashion, *Them!* and its terrified young vacationer epitomized a central paradox of the 1950s. Americans should have been happy and confident. They had won a terrible war, and a booming economy, cheap suburban housing, and a cornucopia of consumer products placed the good life within reach of millions. Hollywood, television, and mass magazines provided diversion. But an undercurrent of anxiety reflected in movies, youthful rebelliousness, introspection by troubled intellectuals, fear of nuclear tests, and rising waves of protest against racial segregation all belied the decade's upbeat mood. The United States in the 1950s clearly was not as trouble-free as a quick visit to suburbia or a glance at television might have suggested. Yet the ill-defined social issues of that decade made their presence felt only sporadically and indirectly.

Domestically, the quality of American life in these affluent years struck cultural critics as deplorable. The by-products of prosperity—rampant materialism, the rise of a homogenized mass culture, and the enormous growth of a desk-bound white-collar class—roused dissident artists, writers, and intellectuals. Was a nation long proud of its individualism becoming timid and conformist? Alexis de Tocqueville had raised

the question more than a century before, and it resurfaced with fresh urgency in the 1950s. Furthermore, although John Kenneth Galbraith's 1958 book, *The Affluent Society*, focused on the persistence of want amid abundance, many people misunderstood its ironic title as a celebration of U.S. prosperity. In 1959 economist Robert Lampman of the University of Wisconsin estimated the size of the American underclass at a whopping 32 million. Journalist Michael Harrington published several articles in small-circulation magazines between 1950 and 1960 with titles such as "Our Fifty Million Poor." At the time, these reports attracted little notice. Untold numbers of poor Americans struggled in rural regions and inner cities, but the realities of poverty and wide economic inequities remained relegated to the periphery of the nation's consciousness.

Globally, the nuclear-arms race, the spread of communism, and Moscow's alleged drive for world domination loomed menacingly on the horizon. Such Cold War anxieties constantly undercut efforts to sustain a positive cultural tone. Nevertheless, in this arena, too, tensions rarely found political voice except in McCarthyite hysteria about domestic subversives.

With two notable exceptions—the movement to halt nuclear testing and an emerging civil-rights campaign—protest impulses stood little chance against the stand-pat outlook expressed in Eisenhower's two electoral victories; suburban complacency and Cold War clichés were too powerful. And despite the increasing tempo of civil-rights activism in the South, awareness of racism as a national shame penetrated white America only slowly and fitfully.

In contrast to the 1930s or the 1960s, the current of reform flowed sluggishly in Eisenhower's America. Discontent with the status quo found a variety of outlets rather than coalescing into a single movement. To trace the patterns of cultural alienation and social activism in the fifties, we will range widely, from the writings of critics and novelists to the world of jazz and folk-music clubs, drive-in theaters, coffee houses, rock-and-roll concerts, antinuclear marches, the Supreme Court, and southern black churches. The churches are especially important. The civil-rights movement, whose 1950s beginnings we examine in this chapter, ultimately would unravel the patterns of racism woven through American history and embedded in the structure of American society.

fifties and early sixties brought an ominous deterioration in superpower relations. Cold War tensions, which had briefly thawed in the mid-1950s, abruptly froze again as the decade closed.

CONCLUSION

The baby boomers who were children and teenagers in the 1950s later displayed a strong tendency to bathe the decade of their youth in a warm glow of nostalgia. A 1989 TV promotion for a collection of fifties pop hits called these "warm, wonderful years, filled with magical memories." A 1980s television comedy series about teenage life in the 1950s revealed its point of view in its title: "Happy Days." In some ways, this nostalgia is justified. Compared to later decades that brought urban riots, campus turmoil, environmental hazards, industrial decline, trade deficits, inner-city crises, drugs, and AIDS, the prosperous, comparatively tranquil decade of the 1950s does seem almost idyllic. In these years, the economy hummed, joblessness remained low, Americans by the millions bought new homes in the suburbs, and many young couples looked confidently to the future after fifteen years of depression and war. The period holds profound appeal for Americans of a later generation beset by a pervasive sense of malaise and of national decline and disarray.

Historians, however, tend to be chary of easy nostalgia. Too often, rose-tinted memories rely on a highly selective version of the past. Viewed more comprehensively, the "warm, wonderful" Eisenhower years take on a complex and more foreboding aura, shadowed by the nuclear-arms race. As the Cold War became institu-

tionalized, touching peoples across the globe, it corroded home-front life as well, narrowing the range of political debate and cultural expression and forcing dissidents to the periphery.

Politically, the Eisenhower years produced a turn to the right and the rehabilitation of American business, a process that had begun during World War II. These shifts, however, remained within the basic framework of welfare liberalism that was the New Deal's continuing legacy. Nineteen-fifties conservatism stemmed from a reaction against the turbulence and upheavals of the recent past. Yet it also reflected a somewhat smug self-satisfaction in capitalism's capacity to produce unrivaled levels of material well-being for unprecedented numbers of people.

On the cultural front, the decade witnessed the emergence of television as the dominant new medium. A potent instrument for marketing and entertaining, TV nevertheless rarely offered a critical perspective on the consumerist culture to which it contributed. Only intermittently did it acknowledge the America that lay outside the affluent suburbs. Television occasionally riveted the nation's attention on the issues of public significance and would do so increasingly as the civil-rights movement gained momentum. In the 1950s, however, it served mainly to further the political apathy and privatization of American life so deplored by critics of the decade, as families gathered around the bulky sets in darkened living rooms. Sometimes, it seemed, Americans related more intensely to the black-and-white images on the screen than to each other or to the flesh-and-blood world beyond.

But this decade, so disparaged for its passivity, also spawned a passionate campaign against nuclear testing, a historic Supreme Court school-desegregation ruling, an important if limited civil-rights bill, and the moral drama of the Montgomery bus boycott. The rise of television, the civil-rights movement, and the deepening U.S. involvement in Vietnam—perhaps the three most important enduring legacies of the decade—all would mold the 1960s and beyond. What finally impresses one most about the fifties is less its bland uniformity than its vibrant diversity. The decade of Dwight Eisenhower, Norman Vincent Peale, Milton Berle, Lucille Ball, and Ed Sullivan also gave rise to James Dean, C. Wright Mills, Allan Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, Little Richard, Elvis Presley, Martin Luther King, Jr., Ralph Ellison, and James Baldwin. Any ten-year period that can accommodate such a range of voices, viewpoints, and causes clearly defies easy categorization.

Amid cultural ferment and rising waves of social protest, politicians again geared up for the quadrennial race for the White House. Vice President Richard Nixon, after serving two terms in Eisenhower's shadow, announced his own candidacy for the presidency. But Nixon would have to wait eight more years to sit in the Oval Office. The streaking meteor on the political horizon in 1960 was not the Republican Nixon but a handsome, boyish Democratic senator from Massachusetts, John Fitzgerald Kennedy.

The election that brought Kennedy to the White House highlighted what many feared was a dangerous erosion of America's position in the Cold War. This anxiety, which the Democratic campaigners harnessed on, arose from a series of events in

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Name:

Date:

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Postwar America Packet Reading Guide

**The Other Side of the Picture Window: Outsiders, Dissidents & Critics
in the 1950s**

1. How did *Them!* & it's terrified young vacationer epitomize the 1950s?
2. What was the paradox of the 1950s?
3. Why did some critics find the quality of life in affluent America deplorable (appalling)?
4. What did scholars like John Kenneth Galbraith and Michael Harrington try to bring to forefront of the nation's consciousness?
5. What were the global Cold War anxieties that challenged 1950s optimism?
6. What are the 2 notable exceptions of "protest impulses" in the 1950s?
7. Explain this quote. "Discontent with the status quo found a variety of outlets rather than coalescing into a single movement."

Conclusion

8. What are some examples of 1950s nostalgia?

9. Why does Boyer argue that this nostalgia is somewhat justified?

10. How did the Cold War corrode (decay) home-front life?

11. What did 1950s conservatism stem from & reflect?

12. What was the influence of TV on America in the 1950s?

13. Even though the 1950s is often remembered as a "passive decade", what are some examples its more radical elements?

14. According to Boyer, why does the 1950s defy easy categorization?

Name: _____.

U.S History
1950's & the Cold War

"RACE: The Power of Illusion" Episode 3, "The House We Live In".

"The House We Live In." - Who is accepted & Who isn't?

WWII Housing Crunch & Home Purchasing

Kalisman vs. Burnett Family Stories

Real Estate & Racial Logic

Constructing Whiteness - what did it mean to be white?

Constructing Blackness - so what does it mean to be black?
Include urban renewal in your response.

1968 Fair Housing Act

"Blockbusting", the White Flight & Effects of...

Significance of Home Equity